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Squiggles, or, the little
red cape

SQUIGGLES

BY DOROTHY ALDIS

EVERYTHING AND ANYTHING
HERE THERE AND EVERYWHERE
JANE'S FATHER
SQUIGGLES, *or The Little Red Cape*

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BY DOROTHY ALDIS

SQUIGGLES

or *The Little Red Cape*

by

DOROTHY ALDIS

- Illustrated by -
Margaret Freeman

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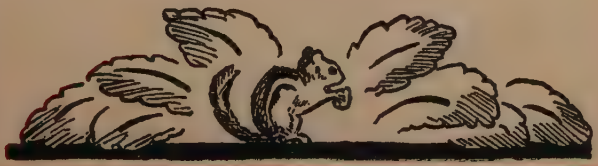
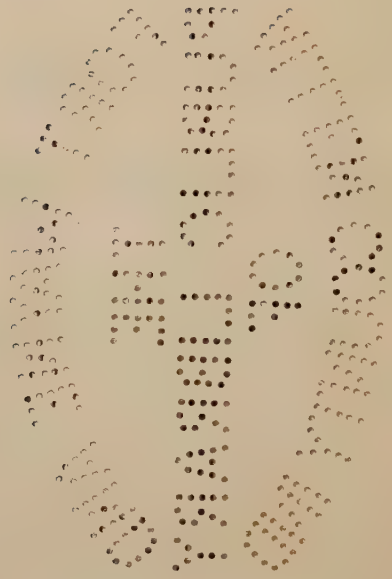
New York 1930





TO

MY FATHER

B W 401387

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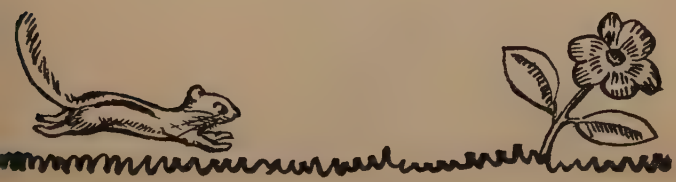

CHAPTER I

HOW IT ALL BEGAN

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EMMY was on her way home from school carrying her doll Gloria in her arms. It had rained the night before and there were puddles in the road. Emmy had new rubbers on.

Walking along she came to an especially big puddle, and very slowly she put one rubber toe in just the beginning of it. The mud squidged up, and when Emmy lifted her foot, made a sound like a suck. Emmy wanted to hear the sound again so she put her other foot in a little bit further. But this time she almost lost her

balance, and when she put out one hand to steady herself, Gloria almost slipped from her arms.

Gloria had on her red cape like little Red Riding Hood's and Emmy thought very quickly how she wouldn't want Gloria to fall in a puddle and spoil her red cape because she liked Gloria's red cape better than any other birthday present. It had a hood and two little pockets, and there was a handkerchief in one of the pockets. So she stopped putting her feet in puddles and started walking towards her home again.

She hadn't gone far when she saw something sitting by the side of the road, and when she came nearer she saw it was a chipmunk. He was sitting straight up with his tail behind him and his paws in front of him as though he were begging. Emmy walked very softly to see how near she could get to him before he ran away, and she got closer and closer. He sat so still that Emmy began to wonder if he were a real chipmunk, but when she was only about three feet from him she saw his eyes moving. They moved very quickly and brightly from one side to another; and then one ear twitched. So Emmy knew it was a real chipmunk, although only a baby.

Emmy and Gloria stood and looked at him, and he looked back at them. Emmy put Gloria under her arm, and knelt down on one knee, and held out her hand. The chipmunk looked at her hand; he didn't come any nearer but

he didn't go any further away; he just stayed there looking. So then Emmy talked to him.

"Nice little baby chipmunk," she said, "are you lost from your home? Where is your mother?"

As she said this she leaned nearer to him and that made Gloria's feet stick up in back, so very

suddenly Gloria said: "MA-MAAAA." It was quite a loud noise but the chipmunk didn't seem to mind it. So then Emmy wondered what would happen if she tried to touch him; very gently with one finger she reached out and scratched the back of his neck.

"Are you cold, little chipmunk?" Emmy asked, because it was late in October and quite chilly out. "I guess you're cold, little chipmunk!"

Oh dear, the little chipmunk was cold! Emmy suddenly felt sad. A minute ago it was fun scratching the little chipmunk's neck, and now she felt sad because he was cold.

And then she thought of Gloria's little red cape. That would keep him nice and warm. She would wrap him up in Gloria's cape and take him home with her. Very quickly she sat down cross-legged in the middle of the road. She bent over Gloria and untied the ribbon under Gloria's chin that kept the little red cape on her.

"There. Now come here, honey."

Emmy said "honey" the way she'd heard nurses say it to babies who were still in their buggies.

The chipmunk didn't come to Emmy, but he didn't seem to mind when Emmy came over to him and put Gloria's red cape across his shoul-

ders. He stayed quite still, only jerking his head about quickly a little when she put the hood part on and tied the bow under his chin.

"There," she said, standing up, "isn't that warmer? Now I'll put Gloria under my coat so she won't be cold, and I'll take you both home." And she unbuttoned one button of her own coat and very carefully put all of Gloria except her head inside it.

But, oh dear, the chipmunk quicker than a person could wink had got down on all four feet and started running. Like a flash Gloria's little red cape went through the trees. One minute Emmy could see it, and the next minute she couldn't. Flash, flash, flash through the trees and bushes. And now she couldn't see it at all any more. It was gone.

CHAPTER II

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT

CHAPTER II

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT

THE chipmunk ran as fast as he could, but Gloria's cape was long for him, and every once in a while he stumbled over it.

He didn't like the feeling of Gloria's cape around his shoulders, nor the way it tied under his chin, nor the hood part over his ears and his head. The hood part was too big too; it kept slipping and covering up most of his face so only one eye looked out.

He kept right on running though, peeking around with his one eye to see if it was beginning to look like home. The cape being over his nose the way it was, he couldn't smell if it smelled like home; he could only peek first right and then left with one eye.

After a while he found his eye was getting

tired with all this peeking. His legs were getting tired too. So, as it seemed to be looking less and less like home instead of more and more like home, he decided he might just as well sit down. So he did.

He sat up very straight on a log the way all little chipmunks and their parents sit; and in a few minutes, after he had stopped feeling so out of breath, he began to think.

He thought about how his mother had told him to play right around the big oak tree near their home, and not go scampering off anywhere else to play.

"You're not old enough, Squiggles," she'd said, "to go running all over the place by yourself; you can't run fast enough yet. Remember when that dog they call Patsy chased you the other day? Well!"

Squiggles remembered about Patsy. He put his two front paws which were cold in the pockets of Gloria's cape, and sat there remembering.

Patsy lived in a white house just over the fence from the big oak, and two or three times a day he would squeeze himself under the fence, and go running all over the woods with his nose close to the ground, snuffling and snorting. Every once in a while he would raise his head and bark quick short barks while his ears stood

up, and drops dripped off the end of his tongue; but then in a minute he'd swish his tail and go on again with his snuffling.

That time that he had really chased him had been awful, Squiggles remembered, taking one paw out of his pocket to straighten his hood. . . . Awful. Patsy had seen him down by the brook where he never should have been, because his mother had told him, the way she always told him, to stay near the big oak tree. But the day had been fine, sun out and birds singing, and Squiggles had thought just a whisk down to the brook and back would never be noticed.

In the middle of the whisk, though, Patsy had seen him, and with a yip the chase had begun.

Squiggles had run so fast that the wind went right down his throat and into his stomach; he went so fast that the trees and bushes rushed by him going the other way. But Patsy went faster. Patsy got closer and closer. Patsy got longer and longer as he ran. Squiggles remembered looking back just once and seeing how long Patsy was, and how near; he was so near that Squiggles could see his wet black nose, and his tongue, and his gleamy teeth.

All the time Squiggles was running he'd kept trying to think if he didn't have any friends

living near the brook; and then as they got up the hill, whether he didn't have any friends living on the top of the hill; but he was going so fast that he couldn't remember the name of one single friend.

But just at that moment someone had called "Squiggles!" and had reached out and grabbed his back legs and pulled him down into a hole.

And the hole to his great surprise had been his own, and what had happened was that his mother, seeing that he was about to run straight across his own home, had grabbed him and pulled him down. Just in time.

The whole rest of that day the whole family had had to stay in because Patsy snuffled around so, and barked such quick sharp barks outside their hole that they were afraid to come out.

"Well, I guess you've learned your lesson, Squiggles," his mother had said.

Which made Squiggles remember that he hadn't learned his lesson at all, because just today he had not stayed by the big oak tree the way his mother had told him to, but had gone out on the road where he had met a little girl with a doll in her arms. And he had been so interested and frightened all at the same time that he had sat perfectly still looking at them. He knew that he should have run away, but he couldn't. And then when the little girl had held out her hand and talked to him and the doll had said "MA-MAAA" in that great rolling voice he had stopped being interested and was just frightened—so frightened that he knew he'd never be able to move again. And then when she'd put the little red cape on him. . . .

Which made Squiggles think that unless some

way he could take off the little red cape and hide it, his mother would know that he'd disobeyed her again. So he took his paws out of the pockets and tried to undo the bow that Emmy had tied under his chin.

But it wouldn't undo; Emmy had tied it too tight.

Well then, he couldn't go home, Squiggles decided. He couldn't go home with the little red cape on, and be scolded and possibly spanked. No, he couldn't go home.

But he wanted to go home. Supper was waiting for him at home. . . . a delicious supper of roots from Patsy's master's vegetable garden. And it was warm and dark at home and smelled

of earth and angleworms; and his bed so snuggled and soft with his sisters; and his father sharpening his nails and his teeth and telling them stories while they lay there snuggled; and his NICE striped mother. . . .

With the back of his paw Squiggles wiped away one tear.

Suddenly there was a noise in the bushes behind him, a crackling snorting noise. Squiggles jumped from the log and listened, his head on one side. Yes, it was Patsy. Which way would he run? Which way? Which way?

Patsy, smelling Squiggles, yipped a high excited yip. Where was he? Yip. Where was that lovely smelling thing he had to catch? Where? Yip. Where? Yip. Yip, yip, yip.

All the time Patsy was tearing round in circles, trembling all over, his nose snuffled tight to the ground. Oh, THERE. Yip. THERE he was! Yip . . . YEAH . . .! Patsy gave a great bound forward and Squiggles, the little red cape streaming straight out behind him, started running.

Squiggles ran faster than he had ever run in his life. His sides ached, and his cheeks ached, and he felt as though there were never going to be anything else in the world but this running, this on and on going, this making his four

feet come together in the middle, and then fly out again.

And then there was a funny whistling sound. What was that? As though someone were breathing so hard that it whistled. Could it be. . . . Squiggles drew his four feet together tight and made them fly out again faster than ever . . . could it be Patsy breathing that way?

Very, very carefully, and without slowing up one bit, Squiggles rolled the eye that wasn't covered by the cape toward the back of his head.

Funny, he couldn't see Patsy. Funny . . . with a toss of his nose, he had been able to stick it out enough to smell with . . . funny, he couldn't smell Patsy. Still he must be there, and right behind him too, because Squiggles could hear this terrible terrible breathing.

Together and out. Together and out. Running and running and running.

"Squiggles!" It was his mother's voice—"SQUIGGLES!"

But Squiggles didn't have enough breath to say "yes, mother" with. He just kept on running.

"Squiggles Acorn, come here!"

Now that seemed foolish of his mother, Squiggles thought, keeping right on with his running, to ask him to come here when Patsy was right behind him wanting him to come. . . .

At the thought of where Patsy wanted him to come Squiggles closed his eyes. He didn't have enough breath left to shudder with, but he closed his eyes tight.

The next thing he knew he felt a bump.

"Squiggles Acorn!" said his mother's voice again.

Oh. Squiggles smelled that he was in his mother's arms. Oh, but how lovely!

"But where's Patsy?" he cried, opening up his eyes very quickly and wide. "He was after me, he was just behind me, I could hear him breathing."

"Nothing was behind you," said Squiggles' mother, "not a thing. You probably heard your own self breathing. But what I want to know is, what is this?"

She took hold of the little red cape. "And how did you get inside it?"

Squiggles, the minute he had opened his eyes, saw that his mother was two things: glad to see him and very cross at him too. He was used to that look of his mother's.

"Oh, mother," he said, closing his eyes again and squirming closer into her arms, "oh, mother dear, I was so frightened; I was hungry and frightened and wanted you so!"

"Did you, darling? Well, I'm right here now," said Squiggles' mother, and started rocking him back and forth in her arms. "Right herey, right herey, right here," she said, singing it, "and we're going to go home to our su-u-up-per, and we're going-to-have-lovely-spinach-roots for our su-u-up-per with roses' roots for de-ssert!"

"Oh, mother, goody, I love roses' roots," said Squiggles, whiskering her.

On the way home . . . and Squiggles was surprised to find how near they were to home . . . just ten trees away, Squiggles told his mother about Emmy and Gloria and the little red cape and Patsy's chasing him; he told her everything.

"But I still don't understand about Patsy, mother," said Squiggles, finishing his story, as his mother pulled him down their home hole after her. "I don't see what happened to him, because he was right after me, mother, really he was."

"I think I understand about Patsy," said Squiggles' mother, "you see. . ."

"Why, Squiggles!" said Squiggles' four little sisters running up to him, "what have you got

on? See, see, see, see, SEE what Squiggles has on!"

Squiggles' sisters sometimes got almost a little too squeaky about things; they were too squeaky now.

"Haven't you ever seen a cape before?" Squiggles asked. "Don't touch it please, your paws are dirty."

"They are not dirty. Are they dirty, mother?"

Squiggles' sisters jumped up and down. "Are our paws dirty? See how nice and clean, and clean, and cleeeeeeeeeeeeeeean they are."

"Let your sisters touch your cape if they want to, Squiggles," said his mother, going off to get supper.

"Yes, mother," said Squiggles, "but won't you please help me take it off now? It's uncomfortable."

Squiggles' mother was sorting out roots.

"What, dear?"

"My cape; it's hot; won't you please help me take it off now?"

His mother went on with her roots.

"Please, mother . . . this bow . . ."

"What a lovely larkspur root this is," murmured Squiggles' mother.

"I suppose your father got it up to Cunning-

ham's. . . . I'll save it for him for his breakfast. Dear me. I wonder what's keeping him so late tonight. . . ."

"Mother, I'm hooOOT!"

"Now see here, Squiggles Acorn," said his mother, sitting down and wagging her paw at him, "you listen to me; the only reason that Patsy dog didn't catch you and eat you up, the ONLY reason you're not in his stomach this moment instead of your own nice hole, is because of that little red cape. . . ."

"Because of my little red cape?" asked Squiggles.

"Yes. Certainly. He smelled you; and then because you never will learn to sit still, he probably saw you moving about, and so he started on a chase after you. But the little red cape frightened him because he didn't know what it was. . . ."

"Is THAT why he stopped chasing me?" asked Squiggles. "Because he was afraid of my little red cape?"

"Of course it is," said Squiggles' mother, "and so from now on, I think you'd better wear it wherever you go."

"Oh no," said Squiggles.

"Oh yes," said Squiggles' mother.

"But not always," whined Squiggles. "I can

take it off now, can't I? I don't have to wear it to bed."

"Well," said his mother, "we'll see. If, when your father comes home, he knows how to put it back on again, you can take it off before you go to bed."

His sisters, who had made a circle round him, sang:

"No, always, Squiggles; you ran away and so you'll have to wear it always, always, always."

"Oh, mother," Squiggles said, "no other chipmunks wear red capes."

"No other chipmunks run away as much as you do, Squiggles," said his mother, "and with that dog Patsy living so near I worry my head off about you all the time. I feel much happier now you have that cape."

"But my tail," Squiggles was nearly crying, "it's so uncomfortable for my tail: it can't stick out."

"Now don't cry, Squiggles," said his mother, and she went over and patted him on the shoulder. "It's silly to cry about that. We'll make a hole for his tail to stick through, won't we, girls?"

"Oh, yes, yes, yes," squeaked Squiggles' sisters; "we'll take turns gnawing. Oh, yes, yes, yes, yes, yes."

And by the time Squiggles' father came home they had a very nice hole gnawed in exactly the right place for Squiggles' tail, and Squiggles' tail was through it.

CHAPTER III

SQUIGGLES AND HIS FATHER GO CORN HUNTING

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THE next morning at breakfast Mr. Acorn, who was Squiggles' father, said that he had some good news for everybody, and Mrs. Acorn, who was Squiggles' mother, blew him a kiss with her paw and said:

"Why, you old duck, what is it?"

"And it seems to have come just at the right time too," said Mr. Acorn, "because I think the little red cape is going to come in very, very handy."

"What is the news?" squeaked Squiggles' sisters. "Tell us, please; please, please, please, father dear, tell us the news."

"Ssh, children; and don't climb all over your father that way—you'll spoil his new winter coat. Get down, darlings. There, that's better," she said, as one at a time Squiggles' sisters got off their father and sat down in front of him, their eight paws begging to hear the news.

Mr. Acorn smiled at them; he sat there twirling his whiskers and smiling at his daughters.

"Why, the news is they've started raising chickens over at Patsy's place. Ever hear of a dog named Patsy, Squiggles?" he asked with a great enormous wink at Mrs. Acorn.

Squiggles giggled.

"Well, they've started raising chickens over there. On my way to the garden yesterday I noticed they'd wired off about half of their old tennis court. Patsy wasn't anywhere in sight; . . . by the way, you don't happen to know where Patsy was yesterday afternoon, do you, Squiggles?"

Squiggles giggled again.

"Well, anyway, he wasn't in sight, so I just put my front paws in the wire, and got a fine

view standing up. They've got a nice chicken house in the corner, and about a dozen young hens running in and out. Just then the gardener came along swinging a big white bag, so I scooted off a little way, and sat by a syringa bush watching to see what would happen. Well . . . he called to the chickens, and then he opened the bag, and then he put . . . in . . . his . . . hand . . . and . . . then . . ." Mr. Acorn, talking more and more slowly, had finally stopped altogether.

"What-was-in-it? What-was-in-it? What-was-in-it?" squeaked Squiggles' sisters, their short little tails beating up and down upon the floor. "Nuts? Acorns? Apples? Tell us, father, please-please-please."

"Corn," said Mr. Acorn. "Lovely, yellow, delicious looking corn. And as soon as Squiggles and I have finished our breakfasts we're going right out to get some. Through, Squiggles? Well then, run, and get your little red cape."

"Oh, but, darling," said Mrs. Acorn, after Squiggles had run off, "even with the little red cape are you sure it's safe? Perhaps Patsy will be used to the little red cape by now. Perhaps the hens are unusually fierce hens; perhaps . . ."

"Now don't you worry about US," said Mr.

Acorn. "You just think how good that corn is going to taste. If we're smart we ought to be able to get enough this spring and summer to last all winter."

"We love corn," cried Squiggles' little sisters, "we love it, we love it, we love it."

"Here's my cape, father," said Squiggles.

"Oh yes, and I want to see how you tie that bow, dear," said Mrs. Acorn, going over to watch him. "Now how in the world did you ever learn how to tie bows?"

"You must remember that you haven't had the same opportunity to learn things that I have," said Mr. Acorn comfortingly. "Now many's the time . . . back up, Squiggles; that's fine; now turn round . . . many's the time I've watched the gardener over at Patsy's place tie up heads of lettuce and cauliflower with a piece of string. There's really nothing to it . . . hold still, Squiggles, please . . .; you see, first you take this end and loop it up this way, and then you take this end and cross it over THIS way, and then . . . Squiggles, hold still, I said . . .; and then you pull both ends even like this, and there's your bow."

"Well, I never saw anything like it!" said Mrs. Acorn. "Straighten your hood, dear, it's crooked."

"It's too big," said Squiggles crossly. He had been so excited about the corn that he had forgotten how much he didn't want to wear the little red cape, but was remembering now. "It's much too big. It's hot. I hate it."

"He hates it, he hates it, he hates it," squeaked his sisters, hopping up and down.

"Don't tease your brother," Mrs. Acorn said. "Perhaps a time will come when all of you wish you have little red capes too."

"Oh no," Squiggles' oldest sister shook her head. "No, we won't. Because we're good little girls and don't run away the way Squiggles

does; we stay home and help our mother; we don't get chased by dogs."

"We never get chased, we never get chased, we never get chased," sang the others.

"Well, come on, Squiggles," said his father, "we must be off."

"You'll be back as soon as you can, won't you?" asked Mrs. Acorn anxiously, "because I shall just sit upstairs with my head out the hole until you come back."

"We'll be back in no time at all, my dear," said Mr. Acorn whiskering her. "Well, good-bye, my dears." And he whiskered each one of his daughters.

"Bye," grunted Squiggles.

He and his father crawled out the hole, and Mrs. Acorn popped right out after them to watch them go.

"There they go!" she called down to her daughters. "Oh dear, Squiggles just tripped on his cape. It looks very red this morning," she called down, "I think it looks even redder than it did yesterday. Ah—now they're both waving. Good-byeeee, good-byeeeee," and she nodded and waved both her paws.

Squiggles and his father went racing along. It was a blue sunny day full of good sumach root smells.

"That cape IS big, isn't it, son?" said his father after Squiggles had got tangled up in it the second time.

"Yes, I told you it was too big. And the hood's too big too; see, I can hardly see." And

Squiggles' one eye rolled crossly round towards his father.

"Well, many's the time I've watched the gardener over at Patsy's place cutting back roses," said his father, "so when we get home I'll have a try at cutting back your cape. My teeth are in fine shape this autumn," he added, "it ought to be easy."

"Well, here we are," said Squiggles. "How had we better go, around by the barn or the house?"

"Well, Patsy's generally still in the house this time in the morning," his father answered. "They let him out about six, but then he goes back in for his breakfast, so I guess this way is safe enough." And he ran up the little hill towards the big white house, Squiggles behind him.

Two squirrels were whisking about the lawn, their fat tails perky and proud, looking for acorns. But when they saw Squiggles inside his little red cape they ran up a tree and chattered.

"Now what folderol is that?" the first squirrel asked.

"Goodness knows," the second one answered. "I suppose it's to hide that ugly stripe that goes up his back. Ha. Ha."

"Come on, Squiggles," said his father, out of one side of his mouth. "They don't know anything; let 'em talk; it'll keep 'em busy while we get the corn."

Squiggles hated having them chatter and laugh about him that way; it made his cheeks feel all hot inside the little red hood.

But there wasn't anything he could do about

it, so he followed his father around by the rose garden and down towards the old tennis court.

The old tennis court was just the way his father had said it was; half of it wired off, and a nice chicken house in the corner of the wired off part, and young hens running in and out of it.

"I think the chickens look quite big, father," whispered Squiggles. "They look bigger than I thought they would."

"Why, they're just about your age, son,"

said his father. "Now look . . . yes! You see, there's quite a bit of corn lying scattered around inside there. The thing to do I think is to get through the wire behind the chicken house where they won't see us, and then make a rush and pick up the corn.

They probably won't mind us, anyway," he went on; "they probably won't pay any attention to us at all because chickens like chipmunks; they don't like squirrels but they're very fond of chipmunks. But it's better to be on the safe side." And very quietly they made their way round to the back of the chicken house.

Mr. Acorn stuck his head in one of the little round holes between wires. And then he took it out again.

"How much space have you got in your cheeks this morning, Squiggles?" he whispered. "Do they feel roomy?"

Squiggles felt the inside of his cheeks with his tongue.

"Quite roomy this morning, father," he answered.

Some days Squiggles could stow away almost as much as his father inside his cheeks, but other days not. It depended.

"All right, son, come on then."

Pushing hard with his back feet Squiggles' father got first his shoulder and the rest of himself through one of the holes, and dropped to the ground.

Squiggles pushed and dropped too.

"Now run!"

They ran around to the front, making small grunting noises.

"All right, pick 'em up!"

Squiggles started picking up the corn as fast as he could, and tucking it inside his cheeks; one, two, three, four, five, six, seven. . . .

But oh my! Squiggles dropped the seventh kernel of corn and stuffed his paws in his ears. Oh my, my, my! The whole world was full of wings flapping, and scared clucking noises, and hens rushing this way and that.

"Run, Squiggles, RUN!"

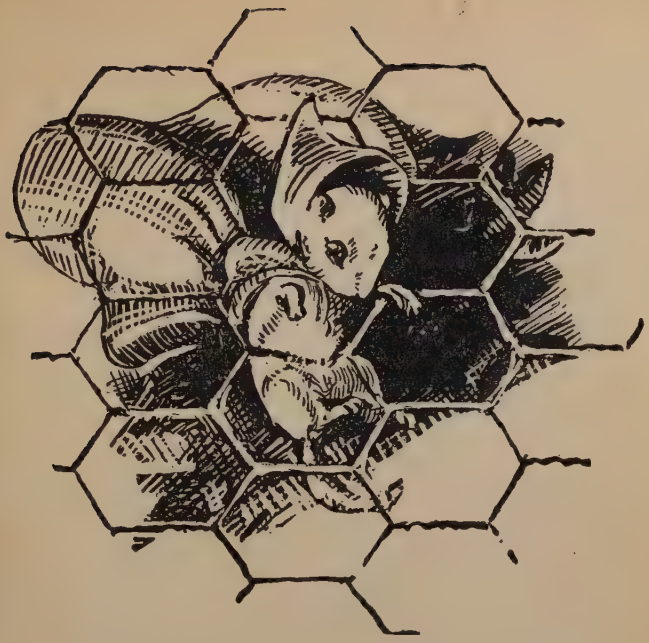
At the same time that his father said, "run, Squiggles, run," a door up at the big white house opened and someone called out; "What IS the matter with those chickens? I never heard such a racket; Patsy, you go down and see what the trouble is, there's a good dog."

And there was a flash of Patsy running across the lawn.

Mr. Acorn was already out through one of the little round holes and half way towards

the road, but Squiggles' little red cape had got caught in one of the meshes, and he couldn't get through. He couldn't get through and he couldn't get back. He was stuck.

CHAPTER IV
SQUIGGLES GETS UNSTUCK



CHAPTER IV

SQUIGGLES GETS UNSTUCK

THE more Squiggles wiggled the sharper the wire got under his stomach, and the tighter he stuck. The tighter he stuck the more he wiggled. Wiggling so much made the little red cape flap about like wings, like bright red wings.

Patsy ran down as far as the syringa bush.

He put his four legs out stiff like sticks and stood there barking, but he didn't come any nearer than the syringa bush. Just then the door up at the house opened again and a little girl came running out. It was Emmy, Emmy who'd tied the little red cape on Squiggles yesterday afternoon.

"What's the matter, chickens?" she called, "what are you making all that noise about? What's the matter, Patsy?"

But when Emmy got near enough to see poor Squiggles stuck in the wire she turned right round and started running back to the house again.

"Mother, it's the chipmunk in Gloria's little red cape, it's the chipmunk in Gloria's little red cape, it's the chip . . ."

"What IS it, Emmy?" asked Emmy's mother coming to the door.

Emmy kept on running towards her.

"Come quickly! It's the chipmunk in Gloria's little red cape."

And she took hold of her mother's hand and pulled her down the steps and across the lawn towards the chicken yard. And then the door opened again and a very tall man came out of the house wiping his mouth on a napkin, and followed after them, running.

And Patsy went on yipping, and the hens flapping and Emmy telling her mother:

"I told you that a baby chipmunk ran off with Gloria's little red cape. See, father . . . "she turned and called over her shoulder, "I TOLD you . . . oh, catch him, please catch him!"

Emmy and her mother and the tall man who was her father ran faster and faster. By this time they were almost at the chicken yard. Patsy left the syringa bush and followed close behind them barking up at the sky, but all the time watching Squiggles carefully out of the corner of his eye.

By this time they were so close that Squiggles saw Emmy's father had a piece of toast and marmalade in one hand.

With the other hand that didn't have the toast and marmalade in it he reached out. . . .

But Squiggles suddenly got himself free. Wiggling a wonderful wiggle he plopped to the ground, and in less time than it takes to count ten he had disappeared into the bushes.

"Well!" Emmy's father blinked his eyes at the spot where he had last seen the little red cape.

"Well," he said, "now we can go back to our breakfasts, can't we? We were eating three very good breakfasts."

But Emmy was crying.

"Now, Emmy," her father said, putting two of his fingers underneath her chin and tipping up her face so he could see it, "who put the little red cape on the baby chipmunk?"

"I . . . I did," said Emmy; "but I put it on him because he was COLD. I put it on him to keep him WARM; but not to KEEP. I didn't put it on him to KEEP."

And just then Emmy remembered about the handkerchief in the little cape's pocket. She remembered how cunning it was with the lace sewed round all the edges, and she thought how badly Gloria needed it now on account of a cold in her nose that she'd caught because she hadn't been wearing the little red cape, and how per-

haps she'd never never see her handkerchief again.

"Oh dear," sniffled Emmy, "that NICE little hanky!"

"Never mind, Emmy; maybe the chipmunk needs it to blow on."

Emmy's father said this to try to comfort her, but it didn't comfort her at all.

They had all started walking up towards the house again and Patsy poked his nose in Emmy's hand, snuffling and whining.

"Well, Patsy, what is it?" asked Emmy's father. "Why didn't you go after the chipmunk, old boy?"

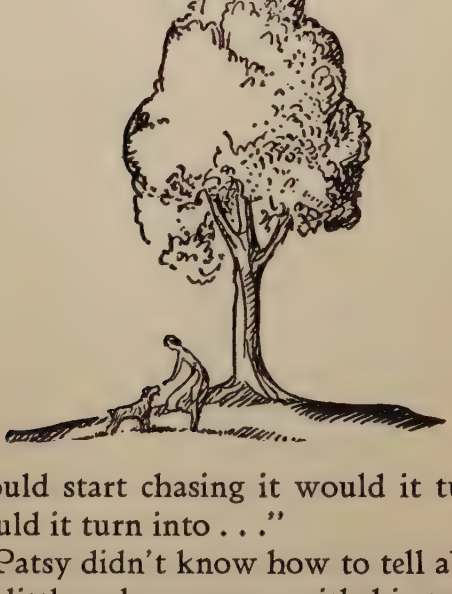
Patsy talked with his eyes and his tail.

"Because I was afraid to," he said. "I was afraid of what-ever-that-was so flapping and flying. I don't understand," he went on whining, "how what smells so exactly like a chipmunk can act so not at all like a chipmunk. Does it mean . . ." he wagged his tail slowly up and down instead of rapidly sideways the way he generally did . . . "does it mean that I won't ever be able to chase a chipmunk smell again?" He nudged his nose twice coldly and wetly in his master's hand. "Does it mean that?"

"Patsy was frightened," said Emmy's

mother, laughing at him kindly, "weren't you, Patsy?"

"I was," Patsy's eyes said, "oh yes, I was. Tell me—" nudging some more with his nose, "tell me, next time I smell a chipmunk smell

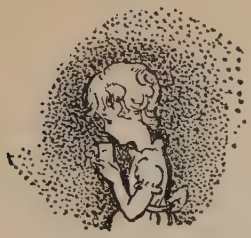


if I should start chasing it would it turn into . . . would it turn into . . ."

But Patsy didn't know how to tell about the terrible little red cape even with his tail, so he just opened his mouth and dribbled.

"Poor Patsy," said Emmy's mother, patting him.

"Won't Gloria EVER get back her little red cape?" Emmy asked as they climbed up the steps



and went into the house to finish their breakfasts. She still had tears on both cheeks.

"Well, we must try to think of some way of getting it back," said her father. "I suppose you don't know where the chipmunk lives who's wearing Gloria's cape?"

"I think I do," said Emmy's mother. "For the last few weeks Patsy has been scratching and barking around that old oak tree just the other side of the fence. I've suspected all along that there was a family of chipmunks there."

"Then I have an idea!" said Emmy's father.

"An idea for getting back Gloria's cape?" asked Emmy.

"Yes," said her father.

"Oh, what?" asked Emmy.

"Well," said her father, . . . "no, go on drinking your milk, Emmy; you can drink while you listen. . . . Chipmunks like corn, don't they?

That's what this chipmunk was doing in our chicken yard, picking up corn. Well then, if we find out that he lives near the big oak tree all we have to do is sprinkle a thin trickle of corn starting near his own front door, and then going under the fence, and up the hill, and around the garden, and . . ."

"And up to our OWN front door," said Emmy, putting down her glass. "Up to our own front door! and he'll be so busy running along and picking up the corn . . ."

"That maybe we can very quietly creep up with a butterfly net and . . ."

"And catch him!" Emmy cried.

"That's right, you've got the idea, Emmy," said her father, getting up. "Now the thing for you to do today is to find out whether the chipmunk who wears Gloria's cape lives near the big oak tree; and if he doesn't live there, find out where he does live. And after you've found out ask William please to give you a little sack of corn, and when I come home we'll start trickling it. Today is Saturday, and I'll be home for lunch."

"Oh, father, what a good idea," said Emmy.

After her father had gone and she'd finished her milk Emmy went upstairs to see Gloria.

She was lying on a pillow, wrapped in a blanket, her nose quite stopped up.

"Never mind, Gloria," said Emmy, picking her up. "Pretty soon you'll have your own little red cape again, and your own little handkerchief to blow your nose on."

"BA—BAAAA," said Gloria. She meant to say MA—MAAA of course. but couldn't on account of her nose being so very stopped up.

"Poor Gloria," said Emmy.

And she made her some nice hot lemonade and left her drinking it while she ran out to find where Squiggles lived.

CHAPTER V

THE CORN TRICKLE

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THE CORN TRICKLE

WHEN Emmy's father turned in the gate on his way home for lunch Emmy ran to meet him with a bag in her hand.

"He does, father," she called; "he does live near the big oak tree. I crawled under the fence and hid under some bushes, and I'd only waited a little while when I saw him."

"You saw him, did you?" asked her father. Emmy was up to him now.

"Yes, running towards me in the little red cape, but not so very fast; I think he was tired."

"You do?"

"Yes, he seemed tired. And when a chipmunk who looked liked his mother popped her head out of a hole next the big oak tree, he squeaked a weak little squeak at her and hurried right in."

"He did, did he?"

"Yes, and so now may we trickle the corn?"

"Well, I guess we can start trickling," said Emmy's father; "just let me take off my coat though."

While Emmy's father was taking off his coat Emmy ran upstairs to see Gloria.

"Gloria," she said, "we're going to begin now and I'll fix you up in a chair so you can see."

And Emmy pulled a chair over to the window. And then she went and got four pillows and put them in the chair. And then she wrapped Gloria up well in her blanket, and wiped her nose, and sat her on top of the pillow.

"There," she said, "how's that, Gloria? Are you sitting high enough so you can see? Way over by the big oak tree is where we're beginning, you know."

Gloria could see very nicely.

Emmy had explained to her before about what was going to happen: how they were going to trickle the corn from the chipmunk's

front door, and then under the fence, and around the garden to their own front door. And how the chipmunk was going to come out of his hole and follow the trickle of corn and be so busy picking up the kernels and putting them away in his cheeks that Emmy's father with a butterfly net in his hand would be able to sneak up and. . .

"Well, good-bye now," said Emmy; "you'll sit here and watch your little red cape coming nearer and nearer, won't you, Gloria dear?"

Gloria's blue eyes were shining.

She sat there and waited.

CHAPTER VI

SQUIGGLES SAVES HIS SISTER

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SQUIGGLES' sisters hopped up and down squeaking.

"Squiggles, look what we found! See, see, see, see!"

And they opened their mouths and showed Squiggles what was tucked inside their cheeks.

"Where d'you find it?" asked Squiggles in a gloomy voice.

"Just outside our door!" they said, emptying out their cheeks into some acorn dishes. "And there's a long line of it, Squiggles! It goes under the fence and off towards the garden and that's as far as we can see, but it's a long line of lovely, lovely, lovely yellow corn. Come, please come, please-please-please come see."

"No," said Squiggles.

"Yes, yes, yes, yes!"

"Please don't pull me," he said to one sister; "please don't push me," he said to another. "I

do not want to look at any more corn today."

But with two sisters pushing and two sisters pulling they soon got him out of the hole.

Squiggles pretended to keep his eyes closed and not look but in between a wink he saw that what they had said was true. There seemed

to be a long line of yellow corn stretching from within about ten feet of their front door and then going under the fence, and around towards the garden and . . .

"See, we picked up all the kernels up to here!" said Squiggles' oldest sister, running to what was now the beginning of the line, "but mother told us NEVER to go under the fence and over to the big white house where Patsy

lives; so, Squiggles, we want YOU to pick up the rest of the corn."

Without even bothering to open his eyes, Squiggles shook his head.

"But, Squiggles, it's lovely, lovely, lovely yellow corn. And you and father hardly got any at all this morning when you went over to the chicken house. And you have on your little red cape, Squiggles! Patsy won't chase you in your little red cape."

"No," said Squiggles. "No. I'm going back into the house, and then I'm going to sleep. I don't care whether I ever see another piece of corn again. Acorns are plenty good enough for me."

"But Patsy might eat, but Patsy might eat, but Patsy might eat us all up!" cried his sisters, very cross at him, and throwing their tails about.

"Go get some little red capes of your own, then!" said Squiggles, and he turned around and popped back in the hole.

Squiggles' sisters were very unhappy. The last thing their mother had said to them before she went off to see a friend was: "And of course, darlings, if you go out, you won't go any farther away from home than the big oak tree, will you?" And they had said, the way they

always did: "Oh no, mother, WE don't run away." And she had said: "I know it, my dears; you're very good little girls and a great, great comfort to your mother."

As a matter of fact, being good was fun for Squiggles' sisters. They enjoyed minding and behaving and obeying because it made them proud to think how good they were. And when they thought about how much better they were than Squiggles, their whiskers curled right up with joy.

But this corn was making them unhappy, because for the first time in their lives they wanted very badly to do something that their mother had told them not to do.

"IF we go under the fence and follow that trickle of corn," said Squiggles' oldest sister, "then we'll be being naughty the way Squiggles always is."

The second sister nodded.

"And then we can't keep on telling Squiggles how good we are!"

"No. And he won't ever forget that we were naughty even though we're only naughty once."

"But that corn looks so GOOD," said the youngest little sister, sniffling her nose; "just think how it will taste!"

They sat in a row and thought.

"And winter's coming soon," went on the youngest little sister, twitching her ears; "there was frost on the grass this morning, which means that soon there'll be snow."

Squiggles and his little sisters hadn't any of them been born until June; so they'd never seen any snow and didn't know what winter was like, but their mother and father had told them.

"I think yellow corn would look very cheerful for breakfast on dark winter mornings, don't you?" asked the youngest little sister. She was the one who wanted to go the most badly.

"Oh yes, very cheer-cheer-cheerful," squeaked the others.

And so, one at a time, they crawled under-

neath the wire fence and started following the line of corn down towards the garden.

They went rather slowly because each time one of them picked up a kernel she stopped, and

sat up straight, and tucked it carefully inside her cheek. And then of course they all kept looking around every few minutes to see if there were any signs of Patsy.

But they didn't see Patsy. They didn't see anybody. Just a long lovely trickle of yellow corn, and they followed it farther and farther.

Patsy saw them though. He was lying under the porch with just his nose sticking out. And Emmy and her father who were hiding behind a bush with a butterfly net saw them. And Gloria, sitting high up on her pillows, saw them coming very slowly across the lawn.

"Oh but, father, the one with the little red cape isn't there!" whispered Emmy.

"Ssh, Emmy," said her father. "Maybe he'll come. Here, you may hold the butterfly net if you'd like to; hold on to it tight."

Emmy held on to it tight.

Patsy's nose, sticking out from under the porch, was trembling, and drops dribbled off his tongue.

"But they certainly smell like real chipmunks!" he was saying to himself; and he had to dig his claws hard into the ground to keep himself from running after them.

The four little chipmunks came nearer and nearer. They had gone all the way around the garden now, and were coming straight towards the house. Their cheeks were so full of corn that they couldn't open their mouths to talk to one another; they could only wave with their tails and twitch with their ears.

"Dear me," Patsy went on thinking, "but perhaps these ARE real chipmunks. Perhaps these

chipmunks will keep on being chipmunks even if I chase them. Instead of turning into . . . instead of turning into . . ." and he shuddered, remembering the dreadful thing with red flapping wings that Squiggles had turned into just yesterday afternoon.

And now they were so close that Patsy could see their eight little cheeks sticking straight out as though they had the mumps, and their eight little eyes shining with joy because they had so much corn in their cheeks. . . .

And then Patsy couldn't stand it any longer.

"Hey, Patsy, STOP!"

Emmy's father was waving the butterfly net at him, but Patsy didn't care. These were real chipmunks, these were! They didn't sprout red wings! They were afraid of him! They thought he would eat them up! Well, he *would* eat them up; they were wonderful, wonderful, wonderful.

And Patsy chased first one of Squiggles' little sisters, and then another of Squiggles' little sisters, and then another and another of Squiggles' little sisters till he didn't know which sister was which, or where he'd left off chasing one sister and begun on another.

And all the time that Patsy was chasing

Squiggles' sisters Emmy and her father were chasing Patsy with their butterfly net. . . .

"Patsy, stop!" they called.

And, "Nice Patsy, come here; nice, niiiiiiiice Patsy."

And, "Patsy, you bad dog, come right here this minute!"

But Patsy didn't hear them. He didn't hear anything; he was too busy smelling.

Finally Patsy decided that Squiggles' youngest sister had the best chipmunk smell of any of them, and so he let the others go and just chased her. And as he got closer and closer to her, Squiggles' poor little sister was so frightened that she could hardly move her short little legs at all. And then he was near enough to grab her. And he opened his mouth. . . .

But just at that moment there was a flash of red across the lawn. Like a shooting star it was, or a bow out of an arrow; it went so fast that you could hardly see anything except it was so red. It was Squiggles come to save his little sister.

CHAPTER VII

GLORIA AND EMMY TALK TO PATSY

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EMMY still had her butterfly net in her hand when she and her father went upstairs to see Gloria.

"We must comfort her, father," whispered Emmy, before they opened the door.

Gloria looked as though she needed comforting. She had fallen off her chair and was lying on her face on the floor. Emmy's father stooped to pick her up.

"Oh, poor little Gloria," cried Emmy, taking her in her arms. "Did you see what happened?"

Gloria's head wobbled round on her neck a little, but they couldn't tell by that whether she meant yes or whether she meant no.

"When did you fall off your chair, darling?" asked Emmy, wiping her nose for her.

Emmy's father said she had probably fallen

off her chair when she'd seen her little red cape running back into the woods again.

"And we didn't get it for you, darling, did we? That bad little chipmunk is still wearing your little red cape. Oh dear!"

"Yes, but he needs it," said Emmy's father. "He needs it to frighten Patsy with. Patsy would have gobbled up that other little chipmunk in just another second if . . ."

Emmy said yes, that was true. She didn't know which to be most, she said: sorry that they didn't get Gloria's cape away from the bad little chipmunk, or glad that the bad little chipmunk had had Gloria's cape to frighten Patsy away with. She couldn't decide.

"But if we could train Patsy not to chase chipmunks," said Emmy, "then that chipmunk wouldn't NEED Gloria's little red cape any more."

"How would we train Patsy not to chase chipmunks?" asked Emmy's father.

"I don't know," said Emmy. "But we could explain to him, couldn't we, that chipmunks don't like being chased?"

"Well, you might try," said her father. So Emmy and Gloria went out to find Patsy.

Patsy was still under the porch. The minute he'd seen Squiggles run towards him in the little

red cape he'd dropped Squiggles' sister as fast as ever he could, and then, with his ears flopped down and his tail between his legs, he'd run under the porch and there he still was, without even his nose sticking out.

Emmy stooped down.

"Patsy," she called. "Are you there? Gloria and I are here, and we want to have a talk with you."

There was a whining and shivering noise in the darkness of under the porch and Emmy got down on her hands and knees trying to see him. She couldn't, though. It was too dark.

"Come out, Patsy. Gloria and I want to talk to you, I said."

But still nothing happened. So then Emmy lay down flat on her stomach with Gloria flat on her stomach beside her and, as far as it would go, she reached her arm under the porch. Gloria reached her arm too. And there was some more sniffling and whining and then Patsy's nose, like a piece of black ice, touched Emmy's hand. And then Patsy's tongue, much warmer, started licking it.

"Nice Patsy, come out."

But Patsy wouldn't. Not until Emmy had gone to the kitchen and asked if she might please have a bone, and cook had given her a bone

and she had come back with it and shoved it under the porch.

Patsy chewed on the bone then, and Emmy moved it away from him a little at a time until first Patsy's nose stuck out, and then his front paws, and then his head, and finally all of him —even his tail. He didn't look the same though. He looked different.

"That awful thing with red wings frightened me again," he said with his tail, thumping it sadly at Emmy. "And a dog doesn't like to be frightened. A dog likes to frighten, but not to *be* frightened. It makes him ashamed."

Emmy couldn't understand what it was he was saying with his tail, but she could see he was sad and ashamed and so she patted his head and played with his ears the way he liked to have her.

"Poor Patsy. Nice Patsy. But you should learn not to chase little chipmunks."

Patsy couldn't understand what Emmy was saying either, but he understood that she was sorry for him, so he licked her hand and, closing his eyes, he shoved his nose up on her knee. And Emmy went on to tell him that it was mean to frighten anything as little as a chipmunk; that it was much better to chase cows or horses or automobiles or grocery boys; anything was better than chasing poor little chipmunks. And that she and Gloria wanted him to promise never to chase a chipmunk again.

"Don't we, Gloria?" she asked, picking Gloria up off her stomach and sitting her up on the grass beside her.

Patsy shoved his nose deeper into Emmy's bare knee.

"Will you promise us, Patsy? When you lick my hand does that mean that you promise?"

And Patsy licked it again.

CHAPTER VIII

SQUIGGLES' LITTLE SISTERS ARE NAUGHTY

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BUT Patsy hadn't understood a word that Emmy had said except, "nice Patsy," and "poor Patsy." And so he kept right on chasing chipmunks.

At first he was careful about it, watching a chipmunk a long time before he started chasing it; but after a while he learned that Squiggles was the only animal who smelled like a chipmunk but who didn't look or act like a chipmunk. So whenever he met Squiggles running around in his little red cape he just walked proudly away. But whenever he met one of Squiggles' little sisters he chased her as hard as he could.

He met them very often too, because Squiggles' little sisters after that one time of being naughty and disobeying their mother, kept right on being naughty and disobeying their mother. She thought after they'd had such a scare they'd never be naughty again, but no, Squiggles' little sisters now liked being naughty even better than they'd liked being good before.

Every evening Mr. and Mrs. Acorn talked about it.

"Squiggles being naughty all the time was bad enough," said Mrs. Acorn one night after the children were in bed, "but having his sisters naughty is worse."

"I know," said Mr. Acorn, "because there are so many of them. Did you cut their whiskers again this morning?"

Mrs. Acorn sighed.

"I did. But it didn't do any good. They ran away again this afternoon. Down to the brook this time."

Cutting a chipmunk's whiskers is the worst chipmunk punishment there is; much worse than a spanking. And this was the third time Squiggles' little sisters' whiskers had been cut.

"Well, tomorrow they'll just have to stay in the house all day and not go out at all," said Mr. Acorn.

Mrs. Acorn remembered what it had been like the last time they had punished Squiggles' little sisters by making them stay in the house all day. The whole house had been so full of squeaks and squeals and up-and-down jumpings that Mrs. Acorn said she couldn't stand the noise another minute, and had spent the day outdoors. "Remember?" she asked.

"Well, tomorrow they will have to stay in bed," said Mr. Acorn, "and not make any noise."

In the morning Squiggles and his little sisters were awake very early. Squiggles, before he even washed his face with his paws, popped his head out of the hole to see what it looked like outdoors because it had been snowing a little bit when he went to bed, and he wanted to see whether the ground would be really white the way his mother and father said it would.

It was. It was whiter than the chickens in the chicken house; it was whiter than the chicken house; it was whiter than his father's teeth; it was the whitest thing that Squiggles had ever seen in all his life before.

And the arms of the trees and bushes were bending down with snow; and the fence-posts were wearing what looked like acorn hats of snow; and there was even a little line of snow

on top of the barbed wire part of the fence. And it was still snowing.

"Mother, father, sisters," cried Squiggles, "it's winter outside!"

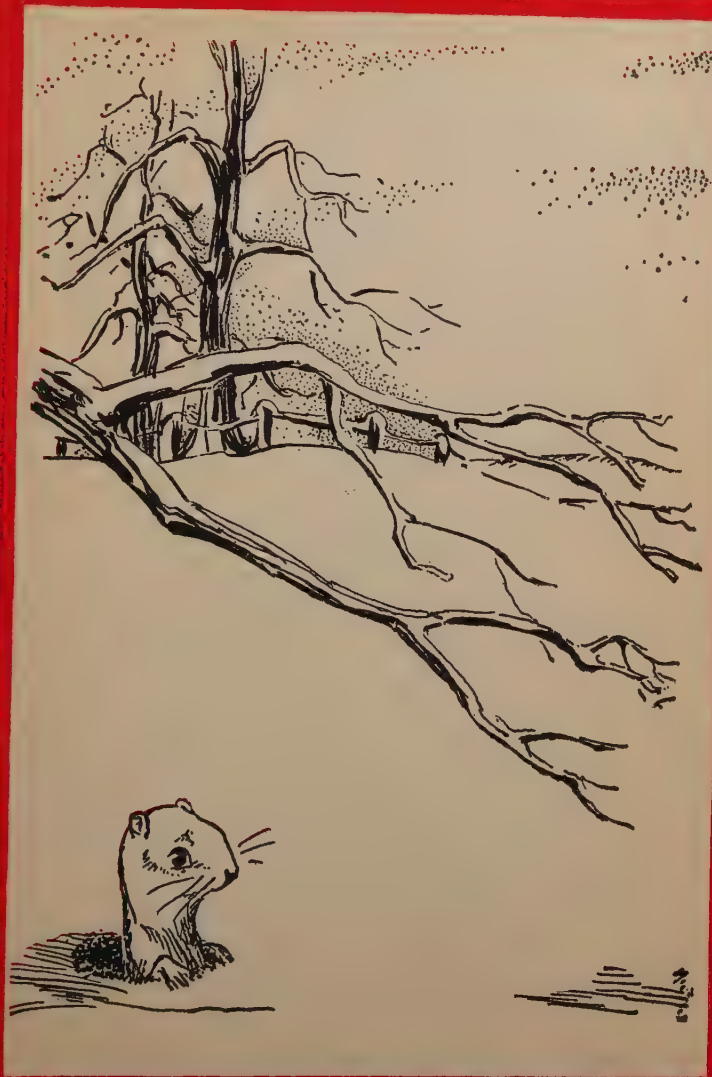
"Of course it's winter outside, Squiggles," said his father, yawning and turning over on his other side. "It's the first of December today. Yawwwwwwwww—go back to sleep."

But Squiggles and his little sisters couldn't go back to sleep—they were too excited. And pretty soon all of Squiggles' little sisters hopped up wanting to see the snow too.

"No!" shouted Mr. Acorn suddenly from his bed, and he sat up. "All of you except Squiggles are to stay in bed today because you were naughty little girls yesterday and disobeyed your mother, and ran away and played by the brook. Go back to bed," he said.

"Oh, father, please-please-please-please," squeaked Squiggles' little sisters, "let us, let us, LET us look at the snow."

"No," said their father, "no. This is a splendid punishment for you. You've been so naughty lately that your mother and I have been trying to think of a new punishment for you. And spanking hasn't done any good, and taking away your rose's root dessert hasn't done any good, and even cutting your whiskers which



we've done three times hasn't done any good. So now here is a new punishment and a very, very good one; you may not see the snow."

"But we'll always be good, but we'll always be good, but we'll always be good after this," squeaked Squiggles' little sisters, "only please, please, please, please. . . ."

"No," said their father.

"Please," squeaked Squiggles' youngest little sister running over to whisker her father.

"No!" he said again, not letting her whisker him although he really wanted to. "Now all climb back into your beds immediately!"

And Squiggles' little sisters did.

Chipmunk beds aren't like most beds. They are hollows in the ground made by chipmunks

lying curled up in the same place every night for a great many nights. And each hollow fits the chipmunk it belongs to. So there they were—Squiggles' four little sisters all curled up in their hollows. Only one eye of each of them showed but that eye looked very sad because more than anything they had ever wanted, they wanted to see the snow.

Squiggles was quite cruel.

"You can't see the snow, you can't see the snow, you can't see the snow!" he cried, hopping up and down. "Good-bye. I'm going out to play in it." And off he went.

On the other side of the fence near the big white house Patsy and Emmy and Gloria were playing in the snow too. Squiggles could see them, and they could see Squiggles very plainly

because the white snow made the little red cape look even redder than usual. Squiggles looked as cheerful as a holly berry whisking about in it.

"There's your little red cape, Gloria," cried Emmy.

Gloria, who was wrapped up in two blankets pinned with safety pins, nodded sadly. Yes, she nodded, there it was.

Patsy, snorting with joy in the snow, drooped his tail a little. People had said that word *little-red-cape* at him so often that he was beginning to think it must mean that terrible animal who smelled like a chipmunk but didn't look or act like one. So every time anyone said *little-red-cape* to Squiggles he felt uncomfortable.

However, he'd learned that if he left the animal called a *little-red-cape* alone, it didn't bother him much. And there were so many other real chipmunks to chase who both smelled and acted like chipmunks that it didn't really matter.

"But where ARE all those other real chipmunks?" he wondered.

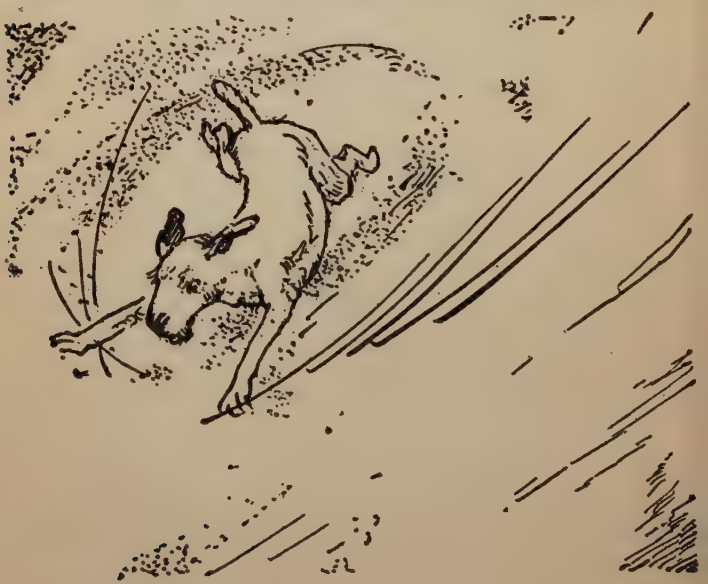
He thought he would like to chase them through the snow.

If only that *little-red-cape* animal would go away he could go and dig them out of their hole. He'd always been meaning to dig them out of

their hole. He would dig and dig until he found them and then he would eat them up.

"Yum!" he thought. And he rushed through the snow in circles, shoving his nose deep into it as he went by, and laughing and showing his teeth.

Emmy and Gloria had been trying to cure Patsy of chasing chipmunks every way they knew how. They had talked to him a great deal about how nice chipmunks were, and they had showed him pictures of chipmunks and made him pat the pictures with his paw; they had



even hung a picture of a chipmunk near his basket where he slept at night, but Patsy didn't seem to understand. He kept right on chasing Squiggles' little sisters.

And Squiggles' little sisters, since they had started being naughty, ran around in so many different directions that it was no use for Squiggles even to try to save them.

Squiggles, rushing through the snow, thought about how all his little sisters were in their beds for being naughty, and was glad he wasn't in HIS bed. He loved the snow . . . it was exciting. He wondered what it would be like down by the brook a day like this; it might be even more fun, he thought, and decided to go and see. Emmy and Gloria and Patsy watched him go.

"Ha!" said Patsy to himself. "That *little-red-cape* animal has gone away and now I will go to the chipmunks' home and dig until I find them." And he ran to the fence, and scrambled under it, and ran around the big oak tree to the hole, and started digging.

Squiggles' little sisters heard him from their beds.

"Mother, mother, mother," they squeaked, "what's happening? Our house is shaking. Oh, please go see, oh, please, please, please, please go see!"

Mrs. Acorn said: "Remember, your father told you you were not to speak at all today, children."

And she went on quietly sorting out her roots.

"But mother, something's falling down on top of us. Oh is it, IS it snow?"

It was snow. Patsy was poking and snuffling so hard that he'd poked quite a bit of snow down their hole, and it fell on Squiggles' little sisters while they lay there in their beds. Like sheets. Like nice white sheets.

"Dear me," said Mrs. Acorn, "it must be that dog again." And she walked over and looked up the hole to see what she could see.

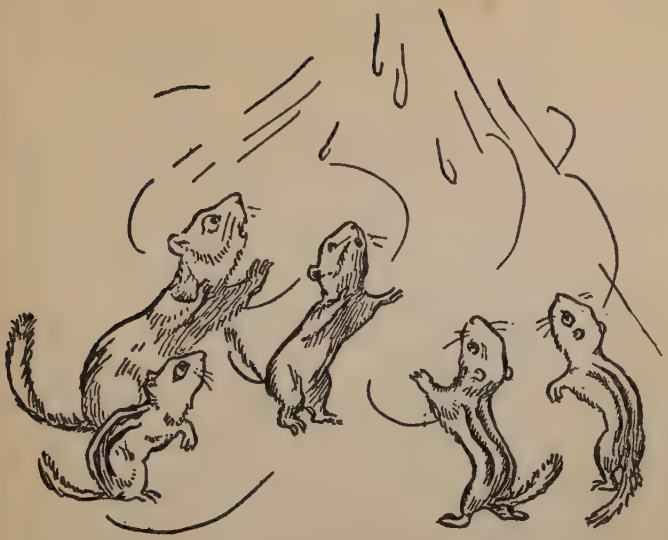
She could see Patsy's nose. Patsy had poked it so far down inside their home that she could actually see its shining and wetness above her.

"Dear ME!" she said again.

And she was so frightened that she didn't say a word when Squiggles' little sisters got out of their beds and came over to where she was standing. They saw the nose, too.

CHAPTER IX

SQUIGGLES SAVES EVERYBODY



CHAPTER IX

SQUIGGLES SAVES EVERYBODY

SQUIGGLES' four little sisters and their mother stood looking at the nose while it poked itself farther and farther down into their home. Now they could see a tongue as red as the little red cape. And now . . .

"Oh, look at his teeeeeeeeeth!" squeaked Squiggles' youngest little sister. And she ran and

climbed back into her bed and closed her eyes tight.

Patsy was making terrible noises and he was breathing so hard that great breaths of hot air blew through their home.

Poor Mrs. Acorn tried to think of something to do, but there really wasn't anything she could do except wait and see what was going to happen. Then she tried to think of something to say to comfort Squiggles' little sisters but she couldn't think of a thing to say; not with that nose coming nearer and nearer and nearer.

And then suddenly the nose disappeared; like a cork being taken out of a bottle, very quickly and with kind of a pop, it disappeared. And Squiggles' little sisters and their mother heard Patsy make some frightened whining noises, and then they heard him barking and running away. And in a few minutes Squiggles, very hot and panting, popped down in the hole.

"Oh, Squiggles!" cried his mother and sisters running up to him and putting all ten of their arms around him. "You saved us, you saved us!"

"I know it," said Squiggles.

"Oh, Squiggles," squeaked his sisters, "it was so terrible."

"I suppose it was," said Squiggles. "Well, you're saved now; stop squeaking!" he said.

"Here, darling," said his mother, running over to the corner where they kept their food and bringing him back the finest rose's root she could find. "Here, darling, eat this."

"Eat-this, eat-this, eat-this," squeaked his sisters, each bringing him the kernel of corn that they'd been saving for their dessert.

"Oh, thanks," said Squiggles.

First he ate the corn and then very slowly and suckingly he ate the rose's root.

"Did he start running away the minute he saw you, Squiggles?" asked his mother.

"Of course," said Squiggles.

"Oh, Squiggles, his nose was coming nearer and nearer!" said his oldest sister.

"He was smelling us," said his second sister.

"And in just another minute he would have been tasting us!" said his youngest sister. All of them shivered.

"Have another rose's root, dear?" asked Squiggles' mother, straightening the hood of his little red cape with her paw. The little red cape wasn't quite as big for Squiggles as when he first got it because he had grown a good deal during the last month but whenever he ran the hood part still slipped down over one eye.

"Why, yes, I'll have another rose's root. And I think I have room for a little more corn too," said Squiggles.

"Oh yes, Squiggles, here, here, here, here!"

But while he was eating his THIRD rose's root and his SIXTH kernel of corn Squiggles' little sisters began being a little bit cross.

"After all, Squiggles," his oldest sister said while they watched him putting the SEVENTH kernel of corn into his mouth, "after all, it wasn't you who frightened Patsy away—it was the little red cape."

"Was it?" asked Squiggles.

"Yes, it was," said his second sister. "Patsy used to chase you just as much as he chases us now."

"He couldn't have chased you as much as he

chases me now," said Squiggles, reaching out his paw for his fourth rose's root, "because there was only one of me."

"You know what we mean," said Squiggles' third little sister. "You know perfectly well what we mean."

"Yes," squeaked Squiggles' youngest little sister. "If all of us had little red capes then Patsy would be afraid of us too."

"Oh, is THAT SO?" said Squiggles.

"Children, children, children!" said their mother. But what her youngest daughter had just said had given her an idea, and she could hardly wait until Mr. Acorn came home that night to talk to him about it.

CHAPTER X

MRS. ACORN HAS AN IDEA

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MRS. ACORN HAS AN IDEA

"DARLING," whispered Mrs. Acorn to Mr. Acorn when he came home that night, "I have an idea."

"But that's very nice," said Mr. Acorn, whiskering her. "What is it, my dear?"

Mrs. Acorn put her paw to her lips. "I'll tell you after the children have gone to bed," she whispered.

"Oh, all right," whispered back Mr. Acorn, smiling and twitching his ears. "Hello!" he said aloud to Squiggles and his little sisters.

"Hello, father!" they said.

Mr. Acorn frowned, remembering something.

"But, see here, I thought I told you to stay in bed all day," he said to Squiggles' little sisters. "And when I tell you to stay in bed all day does that mean that I want to see you OUT of your beds when I come home at night? Does it?"

Squiggles' four little sisters hung their heads.

"N—no, father, but . . ."

"It means when I come home at night that I want to see you IN your beds, doesn't it?"

"Ye-e-es, father, but . . ."

"Well then!" said Mr. Acorn. And he crossed his paws and stood and stared at them.

"But, oh, oh, oh, father . . . see, see, see, see . . ." The heads of Squiggles' four little sisters hung lower and lower.

Then Mrs. Acorn very quickly said to Mr. Acorn not to be cross with them because it

wasn't really their fault. And she told about how they *had* to get out of bed to see Patsy's nose; and how Patsy's nose had come closer and closer and closer. . . .

"Drops dripped off it," squeaked Squiggles' youngest little sister. "Drops dripped off it on to meeeeeee."

"And snow fell in," squealed Squiggles's oldest sister, "Snow fell in on top of meeeeeeee!"

"Ssh!" Mr. Acorn held up his paw. "Go ON, my dear, what happened?"

"Oh, I saved them," said Squiggles. "I saved them. It was really very easy." And he sighed and closed his eyes.

"Yes, Squiggles saved us." Mrs. Acorn nodded her head up and down proudly. And she went on and told how Patsy had suddenly taken his nose out of their home, and how they'd heard him running quickly away.

"Squiggles said Patsy ran away the minute he saw him," she said.

Mr. Acorn went over and patted Squiggles on the shoulder.

"I'm proud of you, Squiggles," he said. "You saved your mother and your little sisters."

Squiggles opened his eyes half way to look at his father, and he smiled before he closed them up again.

"Don't you think, my dear," said Mr. Acorn to Mrs. Acorn, while he kept on patting Squiggles on the shoulder, "don't you think that perhaps Squiggles might have something a little special for his supper tonight? Some corn or perhaps a little rose's root? Because he was so brave?"

"He's just had seven kernels of corn," said Squiggles' oldest sister.

"And FOUR roses' roots," said the second sister.

Squiggles' third little sister jumped up and down.

"It was our *dessert* corn," she said.

"And it was the JUICIEST rose's root." Squiggles' youngest little sister started jumping up and down too.

"And *we* don't think he was so brave!" cried the oldest sister, suddenly giving a beat with her tail on the floor.

"No, *we* don't!" The second sister beat with hers too. The third sister was jumping up and down so hard now that her words shook out of her in jerks. "Because . . . it wasn't Squiggles . . . that scared Patsy . . . away; it . . . was the little red cape . . . that scared Patsy away," she said.

"That's just what I said in the first place;

it was the little red cape," panted Squiggles' youngest little sister, but she was so out of breath with her jumping that nobody heard her at all.

Mr. Acorn slapped his paws together.

"Children, children, children, stop it, that's enough!" he said.

"But, father, see how fat he is," they all cried, pointing at him. They were right, Squiggles was so fat that his little stomach stuck straight out in front of him.

"Our nice corn, and our nice, nice, roses' roots," his sisters grumbled, looking at it.

"Well, I should think you'd rather have a few kernels of corn and roses' roots in Squiggles' stomach than be in someone else's stomach yourself," said Mrs. Acorn. "And if you don't sit down nicely and quietly on the floor you'll have to go back to your beds and not have any supper at all inside your own."

"Inside our own stomachs, you mean?" asked Squiggles' youngest sister.

"That's exactly what I mean," said Mrs. Acorn.

So then they all sat nicely in a row.

After Squiggles' little sisters had eaten their suppers Mrs. Acorn told them that if they'd all go quickly and quietly to bed they could go out and play in the snow for a little while before breakfast in the morning. So they all went quickly and quietly to bed.

Squiggles was still asleep on the floor, so Mr. and Mrs. Acorn picked him up and carried him carefully over to his bed and put him in it. He didn't wake up even when they stopped to whisker him. And then, after Mr. and Mrs. Acorn had said good night to their four daughters, and told them they were sure they'd all be good little girls tomorrow, they went off into a quiet corner of their home to talk.

"And now what was your idea, my dear?" asked Mr. Acorn. And Mrs. Acorn told him; it was to dress Squiggles' little sisters in little red capes so Patsy would be afraid of them too.

Mr. Acorn thought it was a fine idea.

"But it would be nice for you to have one too, my dear," he said.

"Mercy, *I* don't need a little red cape,"

laughed Mrs. Acorn. "Why, I can run just as fast as you can! No dog could ever catch me!"

Mr. Acorn said he knew she was a beautiful runner; he said that was one reason he liked her so much the first time he saw her—because she was such a beautiful runner. But for the days when she was perhaps a little bit tired from sorting out roots, or scolding Squiggles' little sisters . . . for those days it might be a good idea for her to have a little red cape, too.

"Because then you wouldn't need to bother to run yourself, you see," said Mr. Acorn. "Patsy would do all the running, running away from you. Besides," and he put his paw around her waist, "besides, you'd look so pretty in it."

Mrs. Acorn was pleased that Mr. Acorn thought she would look pretty in it.

"I think you'd look nice in one too," she said.

And they sat there in the corner of their home thinking how nice they'd both look in their little red capes.

"When will we get them?" asked Mr. Acorn, after he'd finished his thinking. "Tomorrow? Tomorrow's Sunday; it would be nice to have them on Sunday, wouldn't it?"

"It would, wouldn't it?" said Mrs. Acorn. "Think of us all going out for a walk together

in our little red capes! Dear me, how the squirrels will talk!"

"Won't they, though!" said Mr. Acorn.

"All the blue jays will know about it."

"And the robins."

Mr. Acorn twitched his ears.

"I don't know . . . but I suppose the robins will be a little bit cross about it," he said.

"Why?" asked Mrs. Acorn.

"Wellllll, they've had those red breasts of theirs for so many years I suppose they think no other family should wear as much red as they do."

"Pooh," said Mrs. Acorn, "that's silly."

"I know it is; they'll just have to get used to it," Mr. Acorn said.

"They will; they'll just have to get used to it," said Mrs. Acorn. "Oh, and red's so becoming to the girls," she went on sighing happily; "they got into a bed of poppies this summer and I just wish you could have seen them! They've never looked more lovely! What a sight that was!"

She closed her eyes remembering the sight of Squiggles' four little sisters in the poppy bed.

"My dear!" Mr. Acorn took her paw in both his own, and very tenderly he whiskered it; "my dear, you've had a great many good ideas, but

this idea about the little red capes is the best you've ever had. There's just one thing I've been wondering about, though," he said. "Where will you get them?"

Mrs. Acorn opened her eyes very wide at this, and stared at him. And then quite suddenly she burst out crying.

"Aw Yaw, woeeeeeeeee," she said.

"What my dear?"

"Aw yaw WOOOOOOEEEEEEEEE," she said again between two dreadful sobs.

"WHAT, my dear? I can't quite understand. Now please don't cry," he patted her on the shoulder, "there's no reason to cry, I'm sure. You see, I can't hear a word you're saying if you cry so loud. Besides you'll wake up the children."

It took quite a little time, though, before Mr. Acorn had patted and whiskered Mrs. Acorn enough to make her stop crying so that he could hear what she was saying. And then it turned out that what poor Mrs. Acorn had been trying to say was simply: "I don't know." She'd thought what a good idea it would be to HAVE the little red capes, she said, but she hadn't thought at all where they were going to GET the little red capes. That was the trouble.

"Never mind," said Mr. Acorn comfortingly, "it was the best idea you've ever, ever had." With his own tail, he dried her tears for her.

CHAPTER XI

EMMY'S MOTHER HAS AN IDEA

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EMMY'S MOTHER HAS AN IDEA

EMMY and Gloria grew more and more discouraged with trying to teach Patsy not to chase chipmunks. Chasing them over the snow seemed to be even more fun for Patsy than chasing them over the grass had been in the summer.

Gloria was looking rather pale. She had had three colds in the head on account of not having had her little red cape to wear. And the third cold had been such a bad one, and Emmy had put so much argyrol up Gloria's nose, that her mother had gone quickly to the sewing machine and made a nice warm cape for Gloria out of a piece of material left over from Emmy's new

winter coat. But it wasn't a red cape, and it didn't have pockets; there hadn't been enough material left for pockets. So although the new cape kept Gloria warm enough, she didn't like it very much. And even now, when she and Emmy were playing outdoors and Squiggles went running by in her little red cape, even now tears still came into Gloria's big blue eyes . . . she wished so much she had it back again. Emmy was feeling more cheerful though, because she knew that Christmas was coming.

Christmas was coming and she was always trying to explain to Gloria about Santa Claus because Gloria wasn't old enough to remember last Christmas.

"And you send notes to him up the chimney and tell him what you want most of all in all the world. And then on Christmas Eve you hang your stocking up. And then you go to bed. But you mustn't hop up and down or wiggle, Gloria, because Santa Claus only likes little children who lie quietly in their beds. You may listen, though; you may listen for the sound of his reindeer running over the tops of the roofs. . . ."

Every day Emmy would tell Gloria about it, and every day Christmas would be one day nearer.

In the evenings, after Emmy's father came home from his work, Emmy and Gloria would sometimes send letters up the chimney to Santa Claus telling him what they would like most in all the world for Christmas. Emmy's letters were always different: sometimes she wanted a sled; sometimes a dolly baby buggy; sometimes single runner skates and once a bowl of goldfish. But Gloria's letters were always the same. Emmy and her father helped her write them.

"Dear Santa Claus," they said, "A chipmunk ran off with my little red cape. He wears it every day to frighten Patsy with, and I think it must be all worn out by now. Anyway, he will not give it back to me. So I would like a new little red cape for Christmas, please, dear Santa Claus,

and I would like two pockets in it and a little handkerchief. Love from your friend, Gloria."

One evening, just after Emmy's father had sent Gloria's letter up the chimney for her, Emmy's mother turned to him and said:

"You know, Gloria's letter has given me an idea!"

"But that's very nice, my dear," said Emmy's father. Just the way Mr. Acorn said it to Mrs. Acorn when she'd had her idea. "But that's very nice indeed, my dear, and what IS your idea?"

"Why, it's about a Christmas present for the chipmunk family," said Emmy's mother. "Poor little things, Patsy chases them so all the time, and I thought perhaps if we wrote a letter to Santa Claus and asked him . . ."

But just then Emmy and Gloria, who had had their heads up the chimney watching Gloria's letter disappear, took their heads out of the chimney again.

"I'll tell you all about it after they've gone to bed," said Emmy's mother, putting her finger to her lips.

"Oh, all right," said Emmy's father. "Gloria and Emmy," he said out loud to them, "it's almost seven o'clock now and it looks to me as

though it were going to take you a long time to get your faces clean tonight, so don't you think you'd better be beginning?"

The reason Gloria's and Emmy's faces were as dirty as they were was because they'd had their heads stuck up the chimney for so long. But Emmy's mother and father went upstairs with them to help with their washing and undressing; so pretty soon they were both ready for their beds. And Emmy's mother and father tucked them in and kissed them good night, and then they came downstairs again to talk.

Patsy, who had been lying in front of the fire, got up when they came in the room, and very slowly he moved nearer to them. Patsy was tired. He'd chased all four of Squiggles' little sisters separately all afternoon. And so the minute he lay down again he fell asleep, his nose on Emmy's father's shoe.

"Well now, let's hear about your idea, my dear," said Emmy's father.

"Ssh, I'd better whisper it," she said; "Patsy might wake up and hear."

"But what's the chipmunks' Christmas present got to do with Patsy?"

"SHSHSHSHSHSSH!"

"Well, will it be a long whisper?" Emmy's

father asked. A long whisper tickled his ear, and he did not like the feeling.

"No," said Emmy's mother, putting her arm around his neck, "it's very short." And she started whispering it.

CHAPTER XII
HOW IT ALL ENDED

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HOW IT ALL ENDED

IT was Christmas morning. Mr. and Mrs. Acorn and Squiggles and his little sisters didn't know it was Christmas morning because chipmunks don't have Christmases, but it was Christmas morning just the same. It was a beautiful morning too—bright and shining. Squiggles had waked up first. He was lying in his hollowed bed and thinking. . . .

"Squiggles," called his mother from her bed, "I see you are awake. Please stick your head out, will you, dear, and tell me what kind of day it is outside. Because if it isn't snowing I think

I'll run over and see your cousins the Deep Holes who live at the end of the brook."

Squiggles didn't want to stick his head outside; he wanted to stay in his nice warm bed and keep on thinking. But he said, "Yes, mother," and he got out of his bed and popped his head out of the hole to see what kind of day it was.

And there, on their front door step, was a little fir tree about two feet high. And on it hung six little red capes!

"Mother Father! Sisters!" Squiggles shouted, "Everybody, COME!"

And when Mr. and Mrs. Acorn and Squiggles' little sisters saw that little fir tree hung with all those little red capes they burst right out laughing and singing. And they all joined hands together in a circle and danced around and around it in the snow.

"It was your mother's idea, children," cried Mr. Acorn.

"Yes, but how do you suppose they got here?" whispered Mrs. Acorn softly.

"Never mind, they're here!" Mr. Acorn was very happy, flying his whiskers and tossing his tail about; "they're here, and none of us need ever be afraid of Patsy again!"

"Yes, they're here, they're here, they're here,"

squeaked Squiggles' little sisters; "oh, may we, may we, MAY we try them on?"

"Why, yes, I guess so, children," said Mrs. Acorn; "we'll all try them on. That is, if Squiggles and your father will help us with the bows."

"Certainly we'll help you," Mr. Acorn said.

And while Mrs. Acorn and Squiggles' four little sisters stood very still in a row Mr. Acorn and Squiggles helped tie the bows of their little red capes under their chins for them.

"It's even more becoming than I thought it would be," said Mr. Acorn when he'd finished tying Mrs. Acorn's bow. And he whiskered her inside her little hood.

Just then Patsy ran out of the house and over towards the fence. Patsy had his Christmas present in his mouth. It was a rubber bone and he liked it very much. He liked it so much, and he was so busy throwing it up in the air and trying to catch it again, that he didn't see the chipmunk family standing in a row.

In a few minutes it might be fun to bury his rubber bone in the snow, Patsy was thinking; and then to pretend to forget where he had buried it and go snorting and snuffling around pretending to try and find it; and then, after he'd run enough circles in the snow and pre-

tended enough that he didn't know where that delicious new Christmas bone was, he'd go and get it. And then, after that, perhaps he'd hide it again. . . .

Patsy was thinking so hard about his rubber bone that he didn't have room to be thinking or seeing anything else. But the chipmunk family saw Patsy. They saw him come nearer and nearer. And then, at a nod from Mr. Acorn, very suddenly they all ran towards him. All of them! Mr. and Mrs. Acorn and Squiggles and his little sisters with their seven little red capes flying straight out behind them and flashing across the snow.

Patsy dropped his bone.

"Oh, Gloria, look!" cried Emmy from the porch where she and Gloria were sitting on her new sled. "All the little chipmunks got little red capes for their Christmas presents too, and they're chasing Patsy in them . . . see them go!"

How dreadful, thought Patsy, how perfectly dreadful this is. There seem to be a whole lot more of these *little-red-cape* animals and they are all coming after me. If they catch me they will surely eat me up. Oh dear, I wonder which will be the best way to go: around by the woodshed? Around by the chicken house? Oh dear, oh dear. . . .: he rolled one eye back and saw

Mr. and Mrs. Acorn and Squiggles and his four little sisters all leaping and springing after him, so bright and so red: . . . oh dear, somehow I must manage to make my legs go a little bit faster.

And then he remembered about under the porch. Quickly, quickly, quickly for under the porch.

He got there just in time. And after Mr. and Mrs. Acorn and Squiggles and his little sisters had danced around the place where he'd crawled under for a while, they all went home to breakfast. And after they'd gone home Emmy ran out

and found Patsy's bone in the snow, and shoved it under the porch where he could reach it.

Patsy was glad to get his bone back. He chewed it all day long. And when it was dark he crawled out from under the porch, and Emmy's father opened the door and let him in.

"Why, nice old Patsy," he said, pulling his ears, "I'm delighted to see you. Here's Patsy," he called to Emmy and her mother.

Emmy and her mother were delighted to see him too. They tied a bow from a Christmas package on his collar, and gave him some nice leftover turkey for his supper.

And Patsy never chased another chipmunk after that. He chased automobiles and rabbits and grocery boys and milkmen and sometimes cows, but never another chipmunk.

And Mr. and Mrs. Acorn and Squiggles and his little sisters liked their little red capes better every day. But Gloria liked the new one Santa Claus had brought her best of all, because her little red cape besides having two pockets in it had two handkerchiefs inside the pockets, one in each.

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